[English]

Afforestation

3732. DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a sizeable portion of the forest reserve land in the country has been illegally encroached upon;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken to vacate these encroachments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) to (c) Some portion of the forest reserve land has been encroached upon by people. The details regarding encroachments on forest land are maintained in the States/ Union territories concerned, at divisional level. Government of India has taken following measures to prevent encroachment of forest land :

(i) National Forest Policy, 1988 states that encroachment of forest land has been on the increase and this trend has to be arrested and effective action taken to prevent its continuance.

(ii) The Forest Policy also stipulates that people's participation in management of the forests should be encouraged.

(iii) Under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, encroachment of forest land has been declared an offence.

(iv) State Governments carry out eviction of encroachments alongwith Revenue authorities.

[Translation]

Terror by Wild Cats

3733. SHRI JAGATVIR SINGH DRONA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the terror created by the wild cats in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh recently;

(b) if so, the number of persons who became victims thereof; and

(c) the action being taken by the Government to deal with the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) and (b) According to the State Govt. of Uttar Pradesh, no such incident has been reported.

(c) Does not arise.

Workshop on Forests

3734. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :
SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a National workshop was held recently which was attended by the forest officers and some leading NGOs;

(b) if so, whether the participants have requested/ suggested to strike balance between the conservation of forest and traditional rights of communities in the draft forest bill;

(c) if so, the details of suggestions made in the workshop; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Suggestions to strike a balance between conservation of forests and traditional rights of the communities were made by some of the participants.

(c) Main recommendations are as under:

— There should be a legal definition of "forests".

— The amended Act should consolidate all Central and State forest laws.

— Joint Forest Management rules should be incorporated in the new Act.

— Problems of local people living in and around forests should be considered as an important factor in reserving/notifying or dereserving/ denotifying a forest area.

— There should be a time limit for settlement of rights and it should be on the basis of carrying capacity of the forest area.

— Proposals for dereservation/denotification to be cleared by a statutory committee comprising of government and non-government members.

— Commercial and Agro-forestry should be covered by the new law.

— Working Plans should be given legal status.

— Forest officers should be given more/direct policing powers.

— The new forest law must take into account India's International obligations as ratified under International Conventions.

— Training of frontline staff such as forest guards, who are the key personnel for enforcement of law.

(d) The recommendations have been sent to the Committee constituted by the Ministry for finalisation of the Draft Forest Bill.

Wheat Buyers

3735. SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) whether free sale of wheat by the Food Corporation of India is made in bulk to the private large scale buyers;

(b) if sc, the details of main ten buyers;

(c) whether the sale in small packets of 5 kg and 10 Kg to the consumers has been suggested; and

(d) if so, the response of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) and (b) Under Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic), quantitative restrictions for issue of wheat have been prescribed per buyer per month, from time to time. However, these restrictions were not applicable for issue of wheat from CAP storage under this scheme upto September, 1996 and part of November, 1996.

Since the period for which this information is sought has not been indicated, it is not possible to give the same.

(c) and (d) While reviewing supply position of wheat and wheat products in Delhi, a scheme was made effective from 9.12.96 for distribution of wholemeal Agmark wheat atta in 10 Kg. packs in Delhi through the outlets of Super Bazar and Kendriya Bhandar at a fixed price of Rs. 64/- per pack. Food Secretaries of all States/Union Territories were also requested on 9.12.96 to introduce similar scheme(s) to make wholemeal atta readily available to the consumers at large. Kendriya Bhandar, Super Bazar and National Consumers Cooperative Federation retail outlets were authorised to sell wheat purchased from F.C.I. in ten Kg. bags.

[Translation]

Incident of Smuggling and Intrusion

3736. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of incidents of smuggling and intrusion reported during the last three years, State-wise;

(b) the steps taken by the Government to check such incidents; and

(c) the progress made with regard to the construction of security belt on the border?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) As per information of the Border Security Force deployed on the borders the Statewise details of smuggling and infiltration during the last three years are given in the Statement-I attached.

(b) Following steps have been/are being taken :

(i) Additional Bns. have been sanctioned and deployed under expansion plan to reduce the gaps between the BOPs.

(ii) Patrolling/Nakas have been increased/intensified.

(iii) Border patrolling have been intensified by providing jeeps and motor cycles.

(iv) Mounted patrolling on horses, camels and tractors is being done.

(v) Observation Post Towers have been erected.

(vi) Binoculars, Goggles, Twin Telescopes, PNV binoculars and hand held search lights have been provided for enhanced vigilance on the border.

(vii) Border fence and flood lights has been/being done.

(viii) Intelligence machinery has been alerted to keep closer vigilance.

(ix) Coast Guard/Indian Navy is patrolling the coastal areas.

(x) The matter has also been taken up with the Governments of Bangladesh and Pakistan on various occasions.

(c) A Statement-II is enclosed.